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These University of Dayton professors are available to comment on several aspects of the Halloween or All Hallow's Eve holiday traditions. Here are a few examples of traditions that they can talk about. For more information, call **Jim Farrelly** at (937) 229-3435 and **Maureen Tilley** at (937) 229-4564.

JACK-O-LANTERNS REPRESENT SOULS OF THE DEAD — The origins of All Hallow's Eve are rooted in the legends of pre-Christian medieval Celtic cultures, according to Maureen Tilley, associate professor of religious studies at the University of Dayton.

In pre-Christian cultures, Halloween was a religious holiday in which people believed it was possible to communicate with the dead, according to Tilley. "The Celts believed the glowing marsh gasses were souls of the dead," she said.

Christian missionaries, who found the Celt practices abhorrent, created a legend about Jack, a soul who was thrown out of hell with a hot coal and "popped into a hollowed out turnip and made into a lantern." She said people began carving the lantern to look like Jack's face. When the Irish immigrated to America in the 1830s to 1850s, they used pumpkins instead of turnips because turnips were not as widely available.

For media interviews, call **Maureen Tilley** at (937) 229-4564.

MILLENNIUM'S LAST WITCHES SABBATH — How will this Halloween differ from past "haunted" holidays? Jim Farrelly, professor of English at the University of Dayton who teaches a millennium film and literature course, said this is the "last clash between good and evil" of the millennium.

Farrelly said that according to Celtic mythology, witches meet twice a year — once in the spring to "plant their seeds of evil" and again at Halloween to "reap their rewards" and celebrate with the devil. Farrelly says the last 61 days of 1999 will show how the witches fare.

Farrelly realizes that most people today don't connect the holiday with anything in the realm of the occult. However, fright is still a main ingredient of Halloween. "To suspend disbelief, to indulge themselves in fear without any consequence of fear, that's the thrill for the older kids who like haunted houses," he said. Farrelly blames the gory scenarios often featured in these houses on Hollywood slasher movies.

For media interviews, call **Jim Farrelly** at (937) 229-3435. He will be out of town on Oct. 29-30.